

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 08836 211558Z
ACTION INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4218
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. 11652: NA
TAGS: PGOV, PINR, IN
SUBJECT: BIO INFORMATION ON SURJIT SINGH BARNALA, NEW GOI
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE

1. FOLLOWING THE RESIGNATION FOR THE CENTRAL CABINET OF
PRAKASH SINGH BADAL TO BECOME THE NEW CHIEF MINISTER OF
PUNJAB, FELLOW SIKH AND AKALI DAL MP SUJIT SINGH BARNALA
WAS SWORN IN AS GOI MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION
ON JUNE 18. BIO DATA FOLLOWS.

2. BARNALA, 52, WAS BORN IN A VILLAGE IN THE GURGAON
DISTRICT OF WHAT IS NOW HARYANA. HE ATTENDED THE CHRISTIAN
COLLEGE IN LUCKNOW AND HAS A LAW DEGREE FROM LUCKNOW UNIVERSITY.
OVER THE YEARS, HE HAS PRACTICED BEFORE THE HIGH COURT OF
HARYANA AND PUNJAB.

3. BARNALA HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN POLITICS SINCE HIS STUDENT DAYS,
SERVING AS PRESIDENT OF THE SIKH STUDENTS FEDERATION IN
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1945. HE LATER JOINED ITS PARENT BODY, THE AKALI DAL,
AND HAS BEEN ITS GENERAL SECRETARY SINCE 1973. HIS FIRST ATTEMPT
AT ELECTORAL POLITICS FAILED IN 1953 WHEN HE UNSUCCESSFULLY
CONTESTED A SEAT IN THE ASSEMBLY OF THE FORMER PEPSU STATE.
HE AGAIN LOST IN 1967 WHEN HE RAN FOR THE PUNJAB STATE ASSEMBLY
BUT DID SUCCEED IN BEING ELECTED TWO YEARS LATER IN THE MID-
TERM POLL FOR THE PUNJAB ASSEMBLY. HE WAS LATER APPOINTED

MINISTER OF EDUCATION IN THE AKALI/JAN SANG STATE GOVERNMENT, HOLDING THIS POSITION FOR TWO YEARS. BARNALA CONTESTED THE 1972 PUNJAB ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS AND WAS ONE OF THE FEW AKALIS WHO WAS SUCCESSFUL.

4. WHILE SERVING AS CHAIRMAN OF THE GURU NANAK FOUNDATION, A SIKH EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION, BARNALA VISITED THE U.S., CANADA, JAPAN AND THE U.K. LIKE MANY AKALI LEADERS, HE WAS JAILLED DURING THE EMERGENCY. IN THE MARCH ELECTIONS, BARNALA WON THE SANGRUR LOK SABHA SEAT IN PUNJAB, DEFEATING HIS CONGRESS RIVAL BY OVER 65,000 VOTES. HIS WIFE WAS ELECTED AS AN AKALI MLA IN THE RECENT STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IN PUNJAB.
GOHEEN

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Message Attributes

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